¶ A Sermon exhorting to pitie the poore.

Preached the .xv. of Nouember. Anno. 1571. at Christes Churche in London,

By Henry Bedel Minister there, which treatise may well be called

THE MOVTH of the poore.

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To the Christian Reader.

Here as some for the trial of their wyttes, and proofe of knowledge, are mooued to pen their studies & trauels, which they do most exquisitely, and others for the benefit of their country, some tyme of their own labours set forth bookes, and some of other mens workes in our mother toung do open the meanyng, and all I trust to Gods glory, and the furtherance of knowledge: Euen so I, not of my selfe mooued, by any worthynes I know in my selfe, neither to purchase prayse of men (for this my dede is nothing praise worthy to me, for if ought be fauty, that is to me due, and if any thing be to purpose, that was & is Gods worke in me) haue laboured as farre as memorie might teache, neither addyng nor diminusshing to or from the wordes I spake in the pulpet, to write and pen somwhat for the help of the poore. VVhich the rather I haue done, for that then I was requyred by my friend so to do. VVhich purpose or sum of matter, though of an other it might be more excellently done, then of me it is in this treatise done: yet thinking that all men wil con-

ſider my god hart and well meaning to the poore, it made me the more bolde to enterprise thys matter, to further their poore eſtate that want, and ſo to put in print thoſe rude wordes that then by preaching I ſpake.

And thus hopyng that al men wyll accept my ſylly good wyll in this my labour, vnto which I may ſpeake as Ouid did, Vade ſed in cultus, I leaue the ſucces vnto God of this paynes I haue taken, as wel touching my ſelfe, as alſo for the poore for whom I haue ſpoken.

H. B.

¶ A Sermon preached in Christes Hospitall at London.

PSALME. XLI.

¶Blessed is he that considereth the poore and needy, the Lord shall deliuer hym in the tyme of trouble.

FOr as muche as God hath placed hys Children here in thys worlde for the triall of their patience, and proofe of fayth: and for thys cause hath mired the poore with the ritch, placing some in pouerty, not that he could not make them ritche, but geuing them pouerty to trye their patience, & enritching other some, not that they should trust in their ritches, as by hys Prophet he saith: If ritches rise, set not thy hart theron, Psa.lxij but geuyng them ritches to trye their fayth whether they wyll serue God thorough and by faith that worketh by loue, or els serue Mammon, by keping of him in secret, knowing also the iustifying faith as S. Paul sayth, Mat.vi. is that that worketh by loue. Which loue is Gala.v especially expressed in ministering to the necessity of the Saints, and our poore brethren Rom.xij as the same Paule affirmeth. Therefore al-

so doth Dauid, for his part by these wordes as much as he can, trauel to bring vs to that purpose of faith, to shew our loue to the poore when in these wordes he saith: Blessed is he that considereth the poore and the needy.

Mat. viij As the tree is knowen to be good or bad by none other waies then by his fruites: so the faithfull, not by his wordes, but by his exercises is knowen, in beleeuing and woorkyng the thinges that belong to faith. Therefore our Sauiour saith: Not al that say Lord, but Mat. vij they that do the wyl of my Father, who willeth amongst many thinges that this should be one, namely to consider the poore and the needy. For as the vnsauery salte that loseth Mark. ix his saltnes, is not fyt to season, but to be cast as reprobate and nought in the hye wayes, to be trode vnder foote: so is that faith dead, that hath no exercises in the way of loue, to remember the poore, as Iames saith: Faith if it Iacob. ij haue not her exercises in her self, she is dead.

I speake not this, as if a man should suppose, that he that wanting faith that teacheth to woorke cannot be iustified, hauing the same faith now geuen, that hereafter wold woork, as we see in children that haue not wrought, yet iustified by faith that is lyuely in them, and would haue wrought if they had lyued.

As

As also in the theefe that neuer wrought, be cause he wanted that faith by which now he is iustified, whereby he would haue wrought if he had lyued. Therefore doth faith onely iustifie in them that are preuented, that they cannot worke according to the same, & therefore Grace maketh them free. But to others that haue time, and therin also the iustifying faith, they haue the frutes of the same.

Neither do I speake thus, as if God nedeth our workes or giftes, who geueth vnto vs first, and that with plenty, and casteth no mā in the teth, nor I speake not to the end that we should so worke, as to thinke our selues iustified therin, beyng as our Maister sayth, vnprofitable seruantes, when we haue done all we can do, geuing out nothing, but what we haue receiued, as S. Paul saith. But this exercise of faith to geue to the poore, is required of vs to satisfie our bounden dewtye, not for merite, but in dutie, because the poore are left amongst vs for this cause as Christ saith: Ye shall haue the poore alwayes with you. Luk. vj

Ioh. xij

Which poore for vs, as the ritch for them are left, whereof S. Augustine saith: Propter diuites sunt pauperes, that is, the poore are for the ritch mans sake, which are to be considered as poore and needye, euen as Dauid doth teach

De verbis domini ser. 26.

teach vs well.

But to ariue to my purpose, these wordes of the Prophet contain two profitable notes The first to teach vs to respect the poore and needy, as becommeth the faithfull. Secondly to consider the promise that is annexed therto. And of these I wyl speake by Gods grace seuerally.

First, concernyng the respect and care of the poore, al be it that Dauid doth note it wel in this Psalme, yet to the better satisfying of so necessarye a dewtye, that by the mouth of many witnesses we maye the more spedely be brought to the credite of the same, let vs heare the course of the scriptures, and learne our dutye forth of them.

How earnestlye doth God call vpon vs to remēber the poore by his seruant Salomon, as we reade in the Prouerbes wher he saith He that despyseth his neyghbour, synneth a-
Pro. xiiij gainst hys Maker, but he that hath pyty on the poore, hee shall be blessed. He woulde not haue vs hard harted agaynste the poore & our fellow seruauntes, to saye to them: Go thy way thou straunger, God send thee thou straunger meate, drinke and clothing as Syrache saith. Nor he would not haue vs to be disquieted with the crye of the poore, to stop

our

our eares against them, and therefore sayth: He that stoppeth his eare at the crye of the poore, shall cry him selfe and not be hearde. Prou. xxi,

Nor he suffreth vs not to be careles of their state, being at ease our selues, as that Glutton was mētioned in the Gospel, but as Dauid his father willeth the poore to be considered, so he concludeth saying: the bread of the poore is in the waies of the ritch, he that taketh it from them, is a man of blood. Luk. vi, Eccle, 34

Toby being a good instrument of God, and in this matter worthye to be beleued in hys counsell, who as he wel considered the poore in feding of the liuing, and burying the dead with his own labour and cost, so he teacheth others the same practise of duty whē he saith Be mercyfull after thy power, if thou haue much, geue plentifullye, if thou haue lyttle, do thy diligence gladly to geue of that little. Tobi. iiij

For as God nedeth not the gift, but requireth the dutye: so Toby, not for the qualitie of the gift to be wayed, but in the quality of the minde of him that geueth, teacheth vs to geue somewhat, be it little or much, euen as S Ambrose also teacheth: Non solum quæritur quantum datur, sed de quanto & quanto animo. That is: It is not onelye required how much is geuē, but out of how much and Ambro. in. 1. Cor

with what mynde, not to be prayſed for the greatnes, in that we geue not ſo much as we receiued, for what geneſt thou that thou haſt
i, Cor, iiij not receaued? Nay for the aboundance, becauſe we haue more then nedeth, but for duty requiring the ſame, we muſt of neceſſitie geue. And therfore as in ſubſtance God hath bleſſed vs with the moſt, ſo we muſt ſtudy to geue the more, not that God is pleaſed with ſummes, as though therby we ſhould thinke our ſelues iuſtified, but to diſcharge our ſtuardſhips of that we haue receiued, according to the ſaying of S. Paul writing to Timothe,
i, Tim, vi Charge them that ar ritch in this world, that they be ready to gyue, and glad to diſtribute, laying vp in ſtore a good foundation for them ſelues againſt ỳ time to come, that they may attaine eternall life. Vnto whoſe wordes we may fitly for our comfort and erudition ioyn Siraches ſaying: Reach forth thy hand vnto
Eccle, vij the poore, that thy mercy and bleſſing may be made perfect.

Alſo the Prophet Eſay ſpeaking vnto vs in the word of the Lord, amongſt many wholeſome and neceſſary leſſons forgetteth not to put vs in mynde of our duty to the poore, becauſe it is a pleaſant thing to the Lord, and a fruit of our faith, and a token of Chriſtianty.

There-

Therefore firſt he ſaith: When thou ſeeſt a naked man, couer him, and ſee thou deſpiſe not thine owne fleſh. And after in the ſame place he ſaith: Breake thy bread vnto the hũgry, and neuer turn thy face from any poore man, and ſo the face of the Lord ſhall not be turned from thee. And againe a litle after in the ſame chapter he ſaith: Bring the needy and the ſtraũger brought into thy houſe. Surely in deede howſoeuer wilful affection & vaine pleaſure leadeth vs, we ought not to be vnmindful of our brethren the poore members of Chriſt, ſeing that beſides our duty, euen our exceſſe would content their nede, & our waſt ſerue their lack. So that if at any time God hath geuen vnto vs aboũdantly, which we waſte in ſuperfluitie, that ſhould be the portion of the poore. And for this cauſe we do not ſo, Baſil chargeth vs with waſt that we ſhal ſurely anſwer. He ſaith: Nonne ſpoliatores qui diſpenſanda ſuſcepiſti tanquã propria reputãdo? Eſt enim panis famelici quem tu tenes, nudi tunica quem in cõclaui reſeras, diſcalſiati calcei que penes te marceſcunt, indigentis aurum quod tu poſſides in humatũ. That is to ſay: Art not thou a ſpoyler in taking to diſpence an other mans ſubſtaunce, and then to recken it as thine owne? For it is Eſai. lviij

the bread of the hūgry which thou retainest, the coate of the naked that thou lockest in thy wardrope, the shoes of the barefoote that lie mowlyng and dryng by thee, the nedyes gold that lyeth cankred and buried by thee. Which sentence of Basill, as it teacheth the liberalitie that is due for the poore, so it blameth the careles that accompt al to be their own, keping to them selues more then sufficient. That at the last day the Mite in the croms, the Mothes in the garments, and the rust in the gold maye freate them lyke cankers, as James doth protest.

Iacob.v.

Therfore the hard harted ritch that respect not the poore, and yet wyl be accompted the louers of God, ar reproued by the Apostle s. John, who saith: He that hath this worldes ritches, and seeth his brother to haue nede, and yet shutteth vp the bowels of mercy frō him, how doth the loue of God dwel in him? And therfore they that bragge of the loue of God, who they neuer saw with bodely eyes, let them shew some compassion to the nedy members of Christ, whom dayly they see. Otherwise such careles may boast of Christianitie, but the fruites therof he hath not. He may brag of faith, but he wāteth that which worketh by loue. For the amendemēt wher

1. Iohn.iij

of

of let all that haue and may well ſpare, not reſpecting their fanſies, but conſidering their duty, harken to the wordes of Syrache: Let euery man dele according to compaſſion and mercy with his brother. For be it knowen to all, that as to ſteale from them that rightly poſſes their gowdes, is criminal, and a matter gilty before God, reputed to be ſinne: ſo it is no leſſe but equal ſynne, to kæpe from them that lack, being poore and nedy, as Ambroſe ſaith wel: Non minoris eſt criminis habenti tollere, quam cum poſsis indigentibus denegare. It is no leſſe ſynne (ſaith he) to take from him that rightly poſſeſſeth, then not to geue to him that lacketh, when thou art able For the right ritch man that dulye deſerueth that name, is not knowen by his poſſeſſion, his gorgeous fare and coſtly houſe, his great palace, his Jewels and gold, but by conſidering the poore and nædy, wherof S Auſtine ſaith thus: Diuites aliorum paupertate probantur. That is to ſay: the ritch are proued by the pouerty of others. So that ſyll and alwaies the ſcriptures & Fathers preſcribe not an indifferancie, but a neceſſitie, not at pleaſure, but vpon dutye, that the poore and nædy ſhould be conſidered. Eccl. vij. Auguſt. homelia. 15.

Where is that large liberalitie that in our Fathers

Fathers was sene much, though to an euyll purpose then applied, as therby seeking their saluation, may now be bestowed to a better vse, that is, to foster and fede the powre members of christ. The woꝛld is as great as euer it was, the people as ritch, but not so liberal, our knowledge moꝛe, but in thys poynt we be wylful ignoꝛant. Foꝛ looke what wastfully our fathers as fooles did lay foꝛth and bestow vpon shameles friers that neuer were full, and fat bellyed Monkes whose bellyes were their goods, that now our Nigards can not lay foꝛth, distrustyng their states, least they should beg (say they) befoꝛe we dye, distrusting the pꝛouidence of God, that bleseth their stoꝛes. Wheras in dede as Seneca saith

Seneca de Iuditijs.

Nemo tam pauper viuit, quã nascitur & moritur. That is: No man lyueth so pooꝛe, as he is boꝛne, and shall dye. The extoꝛcioner can spare nought to the pooꝛe, foꝛ ioynyng house to house, with a curse to the same, as

Esay.v.

Esay saith, doing no good to the powꝛe, except it be to cast them foꝛth a doꝛes. The pꝛide of apparel maketh vs foꝛget the patched powꝛe, and our dainty soft lodgyng, their hard couches and straw.

Where is the plentye of gold that garnished ỳ erronious church, the siluer & iewels

that

that so largely was geuen forth to stockes & stones, the cloth that cloathed the Pylgrime god that felt no colde, the stocke that bought the candels to set before them, that had eyes and yet saw nought: Were ye so plentifull about such pelfe, and wil ye geue nothing to poore Iesus Christ? Well, ye make a scorne of the poore & needy, the poore now perisheth by the ritch, and no man considereth it. Is this the life of Christians? Is this the fruite of our Gospell? Is this the mercye that we learne by the worde?

Well then awake from your sléepy securitie, consider your duties towards the poore, stretch forth your niggard handes that presseth downe your mucke, and harken to Syrache, who lyke a good Father teacheth thus as hys sonne saying: My sonne, suffer not the poore to want the thinges necessary for to sustaine hys lyfe, and be not thou hard against the poore. Contemne not the hungry, and greue not the pore in his pouerty. Adde not affliction to the afflicted in hart, and deferre not to confer thy benefite on the poore. Refuse not the voyce of the selly and simple, and turne not thy face from the poore. Cast not thyne eyes from the miserable, least he haue cause to accuse thee. Eccls. 4.

Thus

Thus at length doth Syrache counsell, but we are negligent to heare the same. Heare we may, but credite thereto is small.

Then cõsider, as the benefit is great wher with God recompenceth the mercyfull, so is the iustice very sharpe in condempnyng the hard harted, as in that conclusion the same Syrache saith: For if thou be careles of the poore, faint and needy poore that calleth on thee, he that made him shal heare his praier whẽ with a troubled hart he shal accuse thee. Eccle. iiij.

Then geue, and geue gladly, geue and geue largelye, for the bread that is geuen wyth a grudging hart, is called stony bread, as Seneca saith, reporting the wordes of Fabius Verecosus, which are these: Beneficium ab homine duro aspere datum, panis lapidosus est Esurienti accipere cum sit necessariũ est tamen acerbus panis. That is to say: the benefite hardly geuen of a harde man, is stony breade, being then necessary for the poore to take it, because of his hunger, yet notwithstanding it is but sower bread. Such a geuer in my counsel is next cousin to Sathan, for he gaue Christ stones in steede of bread, but this man geueth the Christian stony bread. Seneca lib. 2. de benefic.

Therfore ye that haue it, be not vnmyndful of the poore I pray you, and agayne geue

eare to Syrach, for thus he doth teach: Lay vp thy almes in the handes of the poore, and know that what thou keepest, in the end thou shalt onelye leese, but that that thou geuest, shalbe as a purs about thy necke, as the same wise man saith: For as this life wareth old and our daies passe away, so shal this vayne pelfe passe away from vs, neither shal riches helpe in the daye of vengeaunce, but the corruption abideth which freateth like a canker. Then what shal it profit to get all the world: and when the world forsaketh vs, that shall be most against vs, that best we loued being in the world. Then in satisfying our duty to geue to the poore, is better then to keepe to our selues the fitting mucke, euen as Lactantius doth teach vs: Vnusquisq; potiorem animam suam inducet, quam bona ista fallacia quorum incerta & caduca est possessio migrant enim unusquisq; velocius quam intrauerant & licet vsq; ad vltimum his frui liceat alijs tamen relinquende sunt. That is to say: Let euery man perswade him selfe, that his soule is better then these subtill ritches, the possession whereof is variable and vncertaine, for they passe from vs muche more swiftly, then they came to vs, and albeit we haue the vse of them euen til the last day, yet at the length

Eccle. 29

Eccl. xvij

Prou. xj.

Lactanf. lib. 7. cap 27.

we in ull leaue them to others. Then I pray thee ay them forth for the profit of your brethren. Learne to forsake them, before they forsake you. Learne the wise counsell of our Sauiour Christ: Make thee friendes of the wicked Mammon.

Luk. xvi.

It is maruail to beare how plentifully the Scriptures commaund vs to be mindfull of the poore, besides that that already hath bene alledged. As in the Prouerbes the wise man saith: Hee that hath pity on the poore, lendeth to the Lord. And Dauid in the Psalme desireth to deliuer the needy from the hand of the synner. And Christ saith: I was hungry, and ye gaue me meate, &c. But how slacke all states are in satisfying this duty, with griefe I speake it, & with dread for their negligence they shall beare and feele it, when it shall be to late for men to dissemble their state.

Pro. xix.
Psa. xviij
Mat. xxv

Yet ye gene not, and why so? Not because ye haue not wherof ye may gene, but because ye will not let go from you that you may well spare. Power wanteth good will that should be adioyned vnto him. The purs is able, but the hart is not franke. Needy niggardy causeth many to profes such a needeles necessity, that that is kept from the poore, that prodigality wilfully doth waste. Many are

good

god to the poore, as we commonly saye, but they will geue them nought, then I say great boast, and small roast maketh vnsauerys mouthes. Yet if woordes wil do any god, they shall not want. For it costeth vs nothing to say: alas good soule God helpe thee, God comfort thee, I would we were able to helpe thee. So that they wish well to them selues in wishing them able, but of such wishing, and for such wishers I say as the Begger to the Bishop is reported to say, that if their wyshings were worth a halfpeny, I doubt they woulde not be so liberall. Therefore let them leaue wyshyng, and fall to some doyng. Ye locke vp and wil not lose, ye gather together euen the deuill and all, and why? because ye wyll hatch the Cockatrice egge. Ye nurse vp a canker for your selues, ye kepe the packe that shall trouble your byage to God as Christ sayth: O how hard shal it be for a ritch man to come to heauen, it shall be easier for a Camell to go thorow a needels eye. Ye saith not so because no ritche man shall be saued, but because the mercyles ritch man shal be damned. Mat. xix.

And wil ye know the cause and what letteth that some geue not: Yee geueth not to the poore because hee is not reputed in the parish: he withdrawth his hand because he is

not set by in the church bigger, proud hartes and Beggers purses, but where is that rule and condition prescribed? Ye pleadeth pouerty, and yet sticketh not to bet, pricke, and play at this marke, and that game in wylful expence, with losse of time, twise so much as might wel serue the neede of the poore, and so at length falleth to neede him selfe, and therfore robbeth the poore in deede of the portion to them due, which by Gods prouidence are made poore. Another swylleth excessiuelye his body with drinke, abusing nature, but forgetteth the thirsty and faint harted soule, making hys own body a den of dronken Diuels, but others want hys excesse. Yee turneth away in rollyng of tymber both his thrift and pitie that is commaunded, thereby making both wife and chyldren beggers. Some in chambering and wantonnes (ye know what I meane) wasteth his body plaged with diseases, and his goods, but ne peny for the poore. Ye casteth to Dogs, that which by nature is created for man, so that al order and honesty, vertue and pietie cleane set aside, euery man followeth his pleasure and filthynes gredely, satisfyng the Prouerbe, euery man for hym selfe. But in the meane whyle the stocks of the poore is cleane forgotten. Which thing

vnles

vnles it be mended, I let you to wyt the poore shall cry, and their voyce shall be heard: theyr distresse considered, and our vengeaunce shall be wrought. I tell you truth in Jesus Christ euen as Dauid sayth in the.xiii. Psalme: The poore crieth vnto the Lord, and he hath heard them. Waxe ashamed therefore of this vnthryftynes, of this waste and excessiue ryot. Open your eares, if not to man, yet to Christ in his Gospel speaking, who very plentifully calleth vpon vs to geue and bestow vpon the poore and needy. Geue, and it shall bee geuen you, saith he, by s. Luke, and that none should thinke them selues so low that they owe no part to the poore, he bryngeth not onelye the ritch, that of their great aboundance did cast into the treasure of the poore, but hee setteth forth before vs the poore widdowes mite, to teach vs as Paule saith to geue gladly. Euen so he reasoneth wyth the craftye ritch man, that would know what to do to attaine eternal lyfe. He sayd: Go sell all that thou hast, and geue to the poore, not that it is necessary for euery man so to do, or that a man cannot be saued except he so do, but thereby teaching him particularly to lothe the world, so thereby vniuersally sheweth vnto all men the care they owe to the poore. And for this cause the

Psa, xxxiij

Luke, vi,

Mark. xij,

Math. xix

holy

holy Apostle prescribeth thys collecting for the poore as a necessary busines, and the Sabbothes labour. Not on the Sabboth to spend and consume all that the weeke hath before gotten, nor by vnlawful games to prophanat the Sabboth, by hunting of tauerne and alehouse to dishonour the Lord of the Sabboth, but as becommeth good Christians to make collection for the poore S. Paule willeth saying: Of the gathering for the saints as I haue ordained in the congregatiõs of Galatia, euẽ so do ye vpon some Sonday, let euery one of you put a side at home, and laye vp whatsoeuer he thinketh meete. He saith not, let euery man waste and spende what he lyst, but laye vp for the poore that that is mæte. For if the ritch would once become liberall, there is superfluous inough to helpe the poore and needy, for nature is soone pleased. I woulde therefore wysh, and with my hart I pray, that the hartes of the prosperous myght be opened toward the miserable, it is an easye matter, for there wanteth but good wyll, and good vse. Then let the proud leaue his cuts, hys pownces, his gardes, and embrothery, and geue nature euen inough to suffise, and hee shall geue the poore a good portion. Let the Glutton serue nature to suffise, and leaue hys surfet, then

1. Cor. xvi.

shall

shall the poore bee fed with that, that bee often times either vomiteth forth, or worketh as a meanes to destroy his lyfe. Let the whoore-monger leaue his dalliance, it shall be good for his body, and better for his soule, and his purs shalbe the heauier to helpe the poore. Let the Artificer syt fast by his calling, then shall hee profit the common wealth by his trauel, and he shall haue some what to spare to helpe the poore, euen as to this purpose S. Paule exhorteth the Ephesians, that eche of them labour with their handes, to obtayne thereby that they may geue to him that hath neede, because we are not borne to our selues, but to our Country, to our Parentes, our brethren and friendes, to do good to all, but specially to the houshold of faith. For amongest all the sacrifices which now the Church vseth, as prayse and thankes geuing to God is the chiefest, so the next is to distribute to the needy Saintes, as the same Paule teacheth the Hebrues saying: To doo good and distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Surely of that goods that we keepe in store, we are answerable, but of that we geue to the poore, we are discharged. That that we keepe, the rust will freate like a Canker, as James saith, but that that is layde vp in the bosome of the

Ephe. iiij.

Galat. vi.

Hebr. xiij.

Iacob. v.

poore,

powre, that is discharged, as our Maister hath commaunded. That that was leaue behynde vs, the wicked may consume in prodigalitie, but that we geue in the way of Christian liberalitie, shall be rewarded as it is written.

Apo, xiij. Opera eorum sequentur eos, that is, their workes follow them.

When trauell not after ritches to get estimation, for thou broughtest nothing into this world, nor set not thine hart vpon vnrighteous Mammon, least thou fall into the temptations and snares of the Deuil, but be mercifull to the powre indifferently without respect of persons. For God as Augustine saith, shal crowne his giftes in thee. Let the Begger be wicked, thou shalt haue the prayse. Though some make an occupation of it, and attempt of their vales, yet as Paule doth bid thee especially remēber the houshold of faith, so he doth not deny thee to do good to all.

1, Tim, vi

Feede not your equales, nor the like his like, franke not your selues to fatte to feede the wormes, for as Esay saith: Your pride shall be pluckt to hell, your fat carkases shall fall in the end, the Moth shall freate thee, and the worme and the dust shall couer thee. But when ye may spare to spend and banket your selues, to make your hartes glad, as Christ

Esay. xxvi

Amos, iij.

saith

saith in the Gospel by S. Luke. Then call the poore and impotent, the halt and the blind. &c Let Herod in his dalliaunce remember his prisoner Iohn: May rather as good and wise men followe these wyse men that presented poore Christ that was layde in the maunger in poouertye and neede, wyth their golde. When Dines hath dined, let Lazarus haue the crommes. Luk. xiiij

Surely it is a shame to see and knowe the contempt of the poore, especially nowe in the time of the Gospel, when faith should so spread her selfe in our hartes: faith I say that is exercised in loue, that bragging much of faith in woordes, do not correspondantly aunswer the same in deede. We can looke vpon the quauering carkas that lieth ful cold, and we say, God helpe thee, and sende thee warmth, but where is our helpe? Yet they are our flesh, so that in contemning them we leaue our duty vndon, and verifie Iames in his saying: If a brother or sister be naked and in neede, wanting their dayly foode, and some of you shall say to them, ga thy way in peace, God sende you warmth and clothing, meate and drink, and shall not geue them the thinges that are necessary for their bodies, what shall it profit them? Surely a good faith that onely is fouls Iacob. ij.

in the good Christian, it alwaies is exercised, but euery tree that bringeth not foorth good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire. It is not inough onelye to beare leaues, but we must also bring forth our fygs, or els the lord Jesus shall cursse vs.

Then this is to be learned, that none contemne or dispise the poore, but that euery mā according to his ability helpe them, and consider of them as Dauid sayth. So that neyther the ritch in defiyng the poore say, away with this Begger, go whip me this slaue, this stincking rascal, this lousy wretch, being his own image: neither on the other syde none say I am so poore I cannot help, I neede help my selfe, for God loueth glad hartes & chereful geuers. For except it be the poore in deede to whom we must geue, ther is no such want but that they may geue somwhat as Fulgentius saith: Dare elimosinam omnibus est possibile, si adsit bona voluntas: Omnibus facile, si non adsit dira cupiditas, omnibus salubre si ferueat charitas cunctis debet esse commune vt omnibus detur eterna felicitas. He sayth: It is possible for all men to geue almes, if all men haue good wil therunto. He saith it is an easy thing for all men to do, if cruel couetousnes be not present. He saith it is wholesome

i, Cor, ix,

Eulgentius Sermone de confessoribus.

for

for all men, if charity be feruent, and he saith it should be common to al men, that al might obtaine eternal felicitie, not in respect of the gift, as I haue said before, but for the promis sake, as Christ saith by S. Mathe w: Ye that shall geue to one of these lyttle ones a suppe of cold water in my name, he shall not lose his reward. Math, x. Mark, ix

Geue we must to satisfie Gods ordinance, wherto he hath ordained vs, as the same Fulgence saith: for God hath ordained Quod demus, cur demus, & quibus demus, that is: He hath ordained the thing that we must geue, a cause why we should geue, and his creatures to whom we should geue. Therefore in respect of the first that he hath ordained things to geue, that must nedes be applyed to the ordinance wherfore it was made, or els we commit synne in abusing Gods ordinaunce. Then secondly in that there is cause to geue, euen the wyll of God prescribing the same, Gods ordaining wyl must be satisfied, or els we commit synne. Last of al for that he hath ordayned to whom we should geue besides fauour, that riseth by loue, in dutye we are bound to geue them ỹ portion that God hath appointed for them, ordayning thinges for them, and ordaining them also to enioy thos Fulgentius de confesso ribus.

thinges, as ordaining ritches and ritch men, to helpe the poore in their powertie.

Which were an easy matter, if ther were a forward good wyll and readynes: For the number of the poore be nothing comperable to the number of the ritch and wealthy. So that in this concourse of people, if euery one would do but a litle, it might be an easy matter to helpe the poore. An easy matter I say, if we folow Chrisostomes counsel, who saith thus: Gratia Dei centum millia hominum huc cõuenere opinor, quorum singuli si vnũ panem quotidie paupertate offerrent, omnes certe pauperes abbundarent: si vnum quisq; obulum solummodo, nemo penitus indigeret. Whose wordes in English are these: I suppose, that by the grace of God, there is resorted to this place one hundred thousand men, of which number if euerye one would daylye geue but one pece of bread, all the poore might abound: if euerye man wolde geue but one halfepeny, no man shuld want.

Chryso. homeli. 87. in ca. Mat. 26.

And may not I say so to you my countrye men, as Chrysostome did to his? Is ther not as great multitudes and concourse of people now, as euer was then? The matter being so small that is required, me thincke it is great impietie if it be denied. If ye be moued

to geue

to geue more, God bleſſe that motion, & moue ye ſo ſtil: if not, yet geue this ſmall requeſt. Rule thy peny I pray thee, let it not rule thée for ons of theſe two offices muſt it needes haue, either ſubiection or gouerment, as the Poet Horace ſaith: Inperat aut ſeruit collecta pecunia cuiq;, That is to ſay. Horace.

The mony that greedely is gathered together.
Either ruleth or is ruled I know not wel whither

Then I ſay once againe, geue, that it may be knowen that ye gouerne, and do not obey, for in keping ye ſame moſt manifeſtly to be gouerned. Againe, leaſt thou go from thy ritches before thou haſt done good with them, ſo heape together I pray thee, that thou mayeſt well ſcatter, and ſo poſſes I beſeech thee, that thou know to geue forth. For the time muſt come, that thou muſt leaue al, whé thou haſt raught and ſcraped together what thou canſt as Martial in his verſe doth truly ſay: Rape, congere, aufer, poſſide, relinquendum eſt. 1. Martial.

Catch and heape vp, filch and poſſes:
Yet muſt thou forſake Mammon reneadles.

But what ſhould I ſpeake of Chriſoſtomes counſell, or vſe mine own perſwaſion, or inſer the verſes of Poets, when as there are

good

god and godly lawes appointed for the same in this Realme of England: as cessments in parishes, and Collectors for the same, forfaits for absence from the parish church, and Sides men for the same, and such others ordayned by authoritie for the comfort of the poore. But how loosely this is loked vnto, it appeareth in the treasure of the poore, for euery mã plucketh his neck out of the yoke, and no man asked why so: the forfaites is neuer asked, be absent who wyl. Thus conscience is careles and lyeth a sleepe, regarding neither duty towardes the poore, nor vow towardes God, neither worldly shame and improfs for their negligẽce, nor the answer they haue to make for the poore: neyther the crye of them that liue for a time, nor the iudgement of him that lyueth for euer. And this is the cause of the want of the poore.

Yea & more then that (such is their remedies care) the ritch as Amos saith, make ha- Amos, 8. uock of the poore, in bying them for old shoes May they will buy them and sel them out of doores. They are good to the poore as they say, but they wil geue them nothing, & thus the poore are robbed, God amend the euyll.

I might apply histories, the reportes of god godly men ẏ wer meruelous beneficial to

the

the poore, but what should Christians in the time of the exhorting and commaũding Gospel vse the counsell of stories to teache them that which God in his woord commaundeth them, which might be easly satisfied if Diues woulde leaue his daintye dishes, and leaue to be Epicurus fellow. If pride would looke vpon pouerty, if Venus would not so couple her self with Seres and Baccus, if godly piety and pitye might once enter into our stonye mindes, if liberality might once kil couetous if ritch men could commaunde the peny that commaũdeth them, which God once graunt.

Surely amongest al the exercises of Christianitie, ther is none more fit for a Christian nor more seemelye, then large liberalitye towards al, and pure pitie towardes the poore. And therefore the storyes reporte of Helena Queene of the Albanes, a most memorable report, that is this, that she being called to ẏ faith of Christ, and so baptised in the raygne of Cladius Cesar, the .x. yeare, great famine oppressing ẏ people in Syria, she of her own cost prepared great store of corne, and sent to them. A notable example to moue Christians in necessitie to pity the poore. But Helena is dead and Ioses, who was called Barsabas, he is also gone.

Flores histor. lib. 1

Consi-

Consider their nede ye wealthye worldlinges, that would be content with hungrye chaps to chaw, and with lanke bellies to devour that that ye wastefully neglect, beyng ordayned for the poore, & not to be cast either to the Dog or dunghil. Regard their trauel, their slauish seruice and drudgery, thinke on their toile, and comfort them. Let Christians learne a lesson of the Heathen Orator Tully who saith thus: Multa vilia & seruilia negotia liberos homines ac ingenuos paupertas agere cogit, ob que potius misericordiam quã interitum demerentur. Pouertie (saith he) compelleth many a good and honest man to take in hand vile and slanishe businesses, for which cause they deserue mercy and succour, rather then destruction. O thinke if ye were in their poore state, how glad ye would be of a smal refreshing, which nowe to them full slackly ye do shew.

Cicero ex appellatione cõtra Eubulidẽ

Therfore let me entreate you with Dauid the prophete, O ye rich men, consider your duty, remember the poore, and of your satiety fill their emptines: Ye that eate til ye blow, and fede til your eyes swel with fatnes, that taste first your course meates, and then fal to your fine, that drinke the colde drinkes for your stomackes that are hot, a cup of claret

wine

wine, some ale or beere to laye a foundation, then eate till to much make vs blow, & then a good carowse to make good disgestion, a cup of sack for the stomacke that is cold, it is good at midlemsale say some, this & that ye haue, and I know not what the prodigal waster licentiously doth spend, which with thankesgeuing vnto satiety God hath created for you. Yea I say that liue in this excesse with superfluity, haue some remorse to the poore in their misery, that God maye blesse ye as Dauid saith, which he shal surely do, as the text doth shew, for such shall be deliuered in the time of trouble, that so shall do. And thus much of the first part.

Now must I speake a little of the second, which I shal not neede to stande long about, becaus the scriptures plentifully teache the same, & experience doth proue it. But what shall we haue for helping the poore? Surely blessing in this world, honor and diliuerance from trouble, as Dauid saith, and retributiõ in the life to come, and their workes shal follow them. Yea and Dauid in thys Psalme, enlarging the benefits by enumeration declareth them saying: The Lord shall preserue him and kepe him a liue, that he maye be blessed, and deliuer not thou hym into the

Apo. xxiij

Psal. xli.

handes of his enemies.

Againe, our Prophet expresseth well the promis graũted to the man that considereth the poore and needy, saying: He hath dispersed abroad, and geuen to the poore, his righteousnes remaineth for euer, his horne shall be exalted with glory. Which words Snoigodane interpreting sayth thus: Dispersit amore Dei non thesaurisauit sibi: Dedit pauperibus non histrionibus aut adulatoribus: Iustitia eius & merces misericordiæ manet in seculum seculi, quia præmium erit eternum. Which wordes englished are thus: He hath geuen to the poore, not vnto wicked rakehels and flatterers, his righteousnes, and the reward of his mercye remaineth for euer, because the reward is eternall in heauen. By which words Snoigodane teacheth wel vpõ whom we shall bestow that we may spare, and who ought not to haue. Then it remaineth that we spend not vpõ Dogs & Bearss as some do, to satisfie their mercyless pleasure, to see two cruel creatures teare one the other: not vpon cardes and dice as some others do: not vpon excesse of apparel and fare as some do: not vpon fensing and dauncing to please the flesh: not vpon varlets and parasites, those fawning dogs, the Catterpillers of the

Psal. cxij.

Snoigodan. in Psal. 111.

of the poore, but vpon the godly and the vertuous poore, for that is the gift that hath the promise of reward annexed vnto it.

The wordes of Tobias whom I haue purposed to be a minister of mercy and pity, may also be applied in this matter, to testify vnto you the reward that followeth the same, as he writeth in these wordes saying: Those that exercise almes and righteousnes, shal be filled with lyfe. So that if they haue not a long race here on the earth, yet shal they surely liue with God for euer in a far better life. Tobi. xij.

Then O deare Christians count it not lost that is geuen to the poore, as some do, supposing it is cast away that is geue to those stinking rascals, but rather thinke and knowe that it is the portion that of all thy goodes is best bestowed. For loke what thou kepest, thou shalt lose, but that the poore hath, thou kepest for thy self. Remember the good captaine Cornelius, whose memory is registred in the Actes, to whom the Angel appearing in a vision said thus: Cornelius, thy prayer and thine almes is come vp before God. Loe here the reward, and also of whom thou shalt be rewarded. Actes. x.

Beleue therfore and know ye that be riche, God willeth ye to lay forth nothing for hym

which he will not recompence: and as ye be-leue so practise to geue to the poore, for ye shal haue neuer the lesse, your basket neuer the emptier, nor your store the poorer. Loke vpon the widdow of Sarepta, litle was her prouision God knoweth, and smal was her store when the poore Prophet came to her to aske her bread. To whom she said, I haue nothing
1. Reg. 17 but a litle flower in a barel, and a litle oyle in a cruise, which notwithstanding she bestowed vpon him. And what followed then? forsoth her barrel was filled with flower, and her pot with oyle. Surely, the plentye that commeth by the poore is much, as Augustine
August. in Psal. saith: Fecundus est ager pauperum cito redit donantibus fructum, that is: The fielde of the poore is fruitful, it surrendreth againe the fruit with spede to them that geue ought, yea
Mark. 9. if it be but a cup of cold water, sayth our Sauiour Iesus Christ.

The blessed Apostle S. Paule specifieth the promise annexed to the exercise of almes, in his Epistle to the Hebrues, saying thus: God
Hebr. vi. is not vnrighteous that he wyll forget your workes of loue, which ye haue shewed to the Saintes for his names sake, which haue ministred to the saintes, & yet do minister. The confirmation whereof Christ in these wordes

expres-

expresseth saying: Blessed are the mercyfull, Math. v.
for they shall obtayne mercy.

To conclude, how many blessinges in sundry sort promised (which he can and will performe that hath promised them) are set down for them that are pitiful to the poore, the scriptures do testifie, which shoulde bee to long to recite. Yea and nature in flesh and blood is not able to reache to the knowledge of them, for that they be celestiall in the kingdome, according to the promise infallible, which by expresse wordes are declared in S. Mathews Gospel in these wordes: I was hungry, & ye gaue Mat. xxv.
me meate, thirsty, and ye gaue me drinke. &c. Therefore enter into the kyngdome prepared for ye from the beginning of the worlde. So then that not onely many terrestriall benefites to enritch vs here are promised in recompence, but these, that as I cannot repeate them, so vnworthely we haue them promysed for any thing we do, but because our gratious God hath promised, we shal surely enioy them. The multitude whereof, the height & depth whereof, the price and beuty whereof, the fame and dignitie whereof no toung hath spoken, no more can mine: no pen hath written, therfore must I stay mine: no hart hath conceiued, yet may we beleue, such glory hath

our

our gratious Maiſter prepared for his faithful Stuardes in that his kingdome that our Chriſt ſpeaketh of. Unto which kingdome God the Father, by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt bring vs al, to whom with the holy Ghoſt be all glory and honour now and euer.

AMEN

¶ A praier which the ſame Henrye Bedell vſeth euerye Sunday aud Holy day after his Sermons, in the ſaid Chriſtes Church.

O Deare GOD our heauenly Father, heare our praiers for Chriſtes ſake, & lay not our ſyns to our charge to puniſh them, and to take vengaunce on them, but rather in the bloude of Jeſus Chriſt blot them forth. We haue deſerued thine anger, we cõfes, but yet in Chriſtes bloud we know thou art wel pleaſed, in whoſe name we cry vnto thee, O ſaue vs from our enemies, that ſeke vs and our bloud for thy Gaſpels ſake. O let not the wicked ſay, where is now their God: but let vs rather ſay, the Lordes right hand hath brought mightye thinges to paſſe,

our

our God shall laugh our enemies to scorne. Therefore heare vs deare GOD, and for thy mercies sake saue thy worthy seruaunt Elizabeth our most gratious Quene. Graūt her we praye thee peace and safetie from all her enemies, geue her the blessings of peace, and a royal courage, whereby through thine assistance she may confound all her foes, and not to feare what man can do vnto her. Let her be comforted with thy swete mercies, lay not our synnes vnto her charge, nor suffer not her life to be plaged for our synnes and wickednes, but keepe her (O Lord) to be thine own, and blesse her with long lyfe and happy dayes. Make her an old mother of this cōmon wealth, and graunt her a long and prosperous raigne ouer vs in thy godly peace. Remember (O Lord) her gratious Counsellers, and behold them with thy fatherly eye. Geue them thy feare, to set forth thy will, and graunt them the spirit of wysdome, and the counsels of peace. The Bishops and Pastors O Lord, direct and make them faythfull in gathering thy harueſt, to breake the bread of lyfe in time conuenient, that thy Church may be builded of lyuely stones. And blesse thy people O Father of might, open their hartes to receiue the dewe

of

of grace, that the seede of thy worde may sticke into them. Geue them O Lord, the spirit of obedience and true humility towardes thy worde, and their Prince. Cast downe thyne eye frō thy throne aboue, beholde our Realme and country, and preserue it by thy myght, from ciuill foes, and from forayne myght, from Turke and Pope, and al popish power, that all the world may see and knowe that thou art our GOD. Finally we pray thee, at thy good wyll, in thy appointed time, open the eyes of the blinde, and conuert the hard harted, that they may come to thy truth and be saued. Teach them to know thy worde, that once we may be one flocke, in one pure faith, vnto one Christ. Confounde Sathan & his members, Antichrist and hys religion, geue thy Gospell a ioyfull and free passage, grue all thy people the freedome of conscience and peace in Christ: through the same Iesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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